

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

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FM AMEMBASSY MANAGUA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7226
INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA
AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA
AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR
AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 MANAGUA 3364

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS, PINT, NU
SUBJECB: DR. EMILIO ALAVAREZ MONTALVAN: TRAUMATIZED AND POLITICIZED

REF: MANAGUA 3311
SUMMARY: DR.EMILIO ALVAREZ, LEADER OF AUTHENTIC FACTION
OF CONSERVATIVE PARTY, ANDLEADER OF REUNIFICATION INITIATIVE
AMONG THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY FACTIONS, HAS BECOME TRAUMATIZED
AND POLITICIZED BY SHOOTING DEATH OF HIS SON DURING FRENZY

SURROUNDING INTERCONTINENTAL HOTEL ASSAULT LAST WEEK (REFTEL).
OUT OF HIS PERSONAL TRAGEDY, ALVAREZ MAY EITHER EMERGE AS
THE LEADER OF A UNIFIED CONSERVATIVE PARTY (PC) OR, IF THE
CONSERVIATIVES DO NOT RESPOND TO HIS EFFORTS TO ASSUME
LEADERSHIP, HE MAY SPLIT WITHTHE PARTY AND JOIN SOME OTHER
POLITICAL GROUP SUCH AS ROBELO'S DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT(MDN).
WHATEVER THE RESULT, ALVAREZ MAY PLAY AN INCREASINGLY
KEY POLITICAL ROLE (END SUMMARY).

1. AMB AND EMBOFFS VISITIED DR. ALVAREZ ON JULY 24 TO
EXPRESS SYMPATHY FOR DEATH OF HIS SON WHO WAS A US
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COLLEGE STUDENT ON VACATION IN NICARAGUA. THE SON WAS
KILLED BY THE GUARDIA (GN) IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE
INTERCONTINENTAL HOTEL ASSAULT ON JULY 20 WHEN HE FLED
FOR COVER FROM THE CAR IN WHICH HE WAS COMING TO PICK UP
HIS FATHER WHOSE OFFICE IS ABOUT 300 YARDS FROM THE
HOTEL. THE OFFICIAL VERSION IS THAT THE SON REFUSED TO
STOP WHEN ORDERED TO DO SO BY THE GN AND WAS SHOT.

2. DR. ALVAREZ, AN OPHTHOMOLOGIST, IS THE MAJOR PC LEADER WHO IS PERSONA GRATA AMONG THE LEADERSHIP OF THE OTHER THREE FACTIONS AND IS RESPECTED FOR HIS INTELLIGENCE AND POLITICAL ANALYSIS. AT THE SAME TIME, AMONG THE OTHER FACTIONS, HE HAS BEEN CONSIDERED AN INTELLECTURAL AND POLITICAL COMMENTATOR RATHER THAN A POLITICAL LEADER. HE RECENTLY HAS EMERGED AS THE MAJOR ACTOR IN TRYING TO REUNIFY THE PC. EMB HAS HAD NUMEROUS CONTACTS WITH HIM AND OTHER CONSERVATIVE LEADERS AND HAS LOOKED ON ALVAREZ' EFFORTS AS A KEY INITIATIVE TOWARDS THE EMERGENCE OF A COHESIVE POLITICAL FORCE WHICH MIGHT THEN BE ABLE TO PROMOTE POLITICAL NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE GON WITH A VIEW TO SHAPING INSTITUTIONAL CHANGES WHICH MIGHT CALM THE CURRENT DRIFT TOWARDS INCREASED VIOLENCE WHILE LEADING TO DEMOCRATIZATION.

3. ALVAREZ IS OBVIOUSLY TRAUMATIZED BY THE DEATH OF HIS SON. HOWEVER, HIS ATTITUDE IS TO PLUNGE FURTHER INTO POLITICS RATHER THAN WITHDRAW. HE IS STILL LOOKING FOR A POLITICAL SOLUTION THROUGH A REUNIFIED PC, BUT HE IS NO LONGER WILLING TO CAJOLE AND CHIDE, RATHER, HE HAS LAID DOWN NON-NEGOTIABLE DEMANDS ON HIS COLLEAGUES. ALVAREZ TOLD AMB THAT HE HAS DECIDED TO OFFER HIMSELF AS A LEADER OF A REUNIFIED PC ON A TAKE ME OR LEAVE ME BASIS. HIS DEMAND ON THE OFFICIAL PCN IS THAT THEY

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WITHDRAW COMPLETELY FROM THEIR MINORITY STATUS IN THE GOVERNMENT (CONGRESS, MINISTRIES, AUTONOMOUS AGENCIES, MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT, AND PRESUMABLY THE SUPREME COURT AND ELECTORAL TRIBUNAL). HE BELIEVES THAT THIS IS A SINE QUA NON FOR PARTICIPATION OF DEPOSED PC LEADER, DR. FERNANDO AGUERO, AND HIS STILL LARGE FOLLOWING IN A REUNIFIED PC. ALVAREZ SAID THE OFFICIAL PCN HAD ALREADY INDICATED THEY COULD GIVE UP ALL THEIR PARTICIPATION EXCEPT IN THE CONGRESS (AND PERHAPS THE JUDICIAL AND ELECTORAL BRANCHES), BUT CONTINUED TO BELIEVE THEIR CONGRESSIONAL PARTICIPATION IS IMPORTANT TO SEEKING A POLITICAL SOLUTION TO THE COUNTRY'S PROBLEMS.

4. ALVAREX SAID HE HAD TOLD THE PCN THAT IF THEY GAVE UP THEIR POSITIONS, HE WOULD GIVE UP HIS MEDICAL PRACTICE AND DEVOTE HIMSELF FULL-TIME TO POLITICS. IF THE PCN WOULD NOT ACCEPT THIS CONDITIONS AND THE FACTIONS OF THE PC WOULD NOT UNITE BEHIND HIM, HE WOULD SEEK ANOTHER OUTLET TO HIS COMMITMENT TO NOW DEDICATE HIMSELF TOTALLY TO WORK FOR A HOPEFUL, ALTHOUGH UNCERTAIN, PEACEFUL EMD TO THE

SOMOZA REGIME. HE REFERRED TO OFFERING TO WORK WITH ROBELO IN THE NEW MDIOR WITH OTHER POLITICAL GROUPS.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 MANAGUA 3364

5. ALVAREZ' PERCEPTION OF HOW TO BRING ABOUT A PEACEFUL
END TO THE DYNASTIC REGIME, UNTIL THE DEATH OF HIS SON,
HAD BEEN A STAGED SERIES OF DEMANDS FOR CHANGE WHICH
WOULD ALLOW SOMOZA THE POSSIBILITY FOR A NEGOTIATED
CHANGE IN THE RULES OF THE GAME WHICH COULD LEAD TO
ELECTIONS IN 1981. HE NO LONGER SUPPORTS THIS CONCEPT.
HE REFERRED TO AN ALL-OUT GENERAL STRIKE AS THE TYPE OF
DIRECT CONTRONTATION AGAINST THE REGIME WHICH IS NOW
NEEDED.

6 ALVAREZ NO LONGER BELIEVES SOMOZA CAN BE APPROACHED
AS A RATIONAL POLITICAL ADVERSARY. THE CHANGE IN HIS
THINKING DERIVES FROM HIS SON'S DEATH AND THE FACT THE
GON DELIVEBATELY, OR AS A RESULT OF GROSS NEGLIGENCE,
WITHHELD NEWS OF THE DEATH, AND TOLD HIM AT ONE POINT
HIS SON WAS DETAINED FOR A TRAFFIC VIOLATION, UNTIL
THE FOLLOWING DAY. APPARENTLY, IT WAS ALVAREZ' CALL
TO THE AMB THE NEXT MORNING AND THE AMB'S CALL TO THE
GN WHICH RESULTED IN THE MORGUE FINALLY NOTIFYING
ALVAREZ. ALVAREZ CITED SOMOZA'S MOST RECENT AND EARLIER
PRESS CONFERENCES AS DEMONSTRATING THAT SOMOZA WAS
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ENTIRELY OUT OF TOUCH WITH THE SITUATION IN THE COUNTRY. HE WENT ON TO CITE AS FACT BASED ON ABSOLUTELY UNBIASED SECOND-HAND INFORMATION THAT SOMOZA HAD RECEIVED PSYCHIATRIC TREATMENT IN THE CANAL ZONE IN 1954 AFTER HAVING PERSONALLY KILLED CONSERVATIVE PARTY ARMED REVOLUTIONARIES. HE ADDED THAT SOMOZA HAD ALSO RECEIVED PSYCHIATRIC CARE AT THE MENNINGER CLINIC ON NUMEROUS OCCASIONS. HIS CONCLUSION IS THAT SOMOZA IS MENTALLY UNBALANCED AND IS PREPARED TO TAKE THE COUNTRY UP IN FLAMES WITH HIM IN AN ACT OF POLITICAL SUICIDE.

7 ALVAREZ ALSO SAID HE HAD BEEN INFORMED BY FATHER FERNANDO CARDENAL, ONE OF THE GROUP OF TWELVE, THAT THE LEFTIST GROUPS, MAINLY STUDENTS AND OTHER RADICALS, WERE PREPARING TO ENTER THE UMBRELLA OPPOSITION BROAD FRONT (FAO). ALVAREZ POINTED OUT IF THIS HAPPENS, ALL POLITICALLY ACTIVE FORCES IN THE COUNTRY WILL BE IN THE FAO. POLOFF OPINED THAT IF THIS HAPPENS, THERE WILL BE SERIOUS STRAINS IN THE FAO BETWEEN DEMOCRATIC FORCES AND REVOLUTIONARIES. ALVAREZ AGREED AND SAID IF THIS SHOULD LEAD TO A SPLITTING APART OF THE FAO, THEN THE PC MUST BE PREPARED TO TAKE THE LEAD OF THE DEMOCRATIC FORCES.

8. COMMENT: ALVAREZ MAY BE ABLE TO ASSUME NOW A LEADERSHIP ROLE WHICH HE PREVIOUSLY HAD CONSISTANTLY ESCHEWED. HE HAS THE POLITICAL ASTUTENESS TO HAVE A VERY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT. IT IS CLEAR, HOWEVER, THAT HIS EMOTIONS OVER THE LOSS OF HIS SON ARE INFLUENCING HIS NORMAL DISPASSIONATE POLITICAL ANALYSIS, AND UNCLEAR WHETHER HIS LEADERSHIP WOULD PROVIDE WHAT THE PC AND THE OPPOSITION NEED IN TERMS OF A SHARPLY FOCUSED CAMPAIGN TO BRING ABOUT CHANGE. EMB CONSIDERS THE
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POSSIBILITY OF THE OFFICIAL PCN ACCEPTING ALVAREZ' DEMANDS FOR A WITHDRAWAL FROM GOVERNMENT TO BE FIFTY-FIFTY. THE SAME ODDS WOULD APPLY TO AGUERO AND THE RCN ACCEPTING ALVAREZ AS THE LEADER OF A UNIFIED PARTY. SOLAUN

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